What is claimed is:

1. A method for separating a pane of a brittle material from a moving sheet of the material along a separation line, said pane and said sheet having a width W, said pane when separated having a length L, said movement of the sheet being described by a vector $\bar{V}_{sheet}$, said method comprising:

    (a) releasably engaging the moving sheet within an area defined by the length L and width W of the to-be-separated pane;

    (b) rotating the to-be-separated pane about an axis which substantially coincides with the separation line, said rotation causing the pane to separate from the sheet; and

    (c) passively moving the separated pane relative to the moving sheet using gravity as the motive force so that the pane and the sheet do not contact each other once separation occurs.

2. The method of Claim 1 where $\bar{V}_{sheet}$ is substantially vertical.

3. The method of Claim 1 wherein the releasable engagement is a vacuum engagement.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein the brittle material is glass.

5. A method for separating a pane of a brittle material from a moving sheet of the material along a separation line, said pane and said sheet having a width W, said pane when separated having a length L, said movement of the sheet being described by a vector $\bar{V}_{sheet}$, said method comprising:

    (a) releasably engaging the moving sheet within an area defined by the length L and width W of the to-be-separated pane;

    (b) rotating the to-be-separated pane about an axis which substantially coincides with the separation line, said rotation causing the pane to separate from the sheet; and

(c)   moving the separated pane relative to the moving sheet so that the pane and the sheet do not contact each other once separation occurs, said movement employing as a motive force at least one of a hydraulic force, a mechanical spring force, a pneumatic force, and a vacuum.

6.   The method of Claim 5 wherein a part of the motive force is due to the force of gravity.

7.   The method of Claim 6 where $\bar{V}_{sheet}$ is substantially vertical.

8.   The method of Claim 5 wherein the releasable engagement is a vacuum engagement.

9.   The method of Claim 5 wherein the brittle material is glass.